HEXOLOGY

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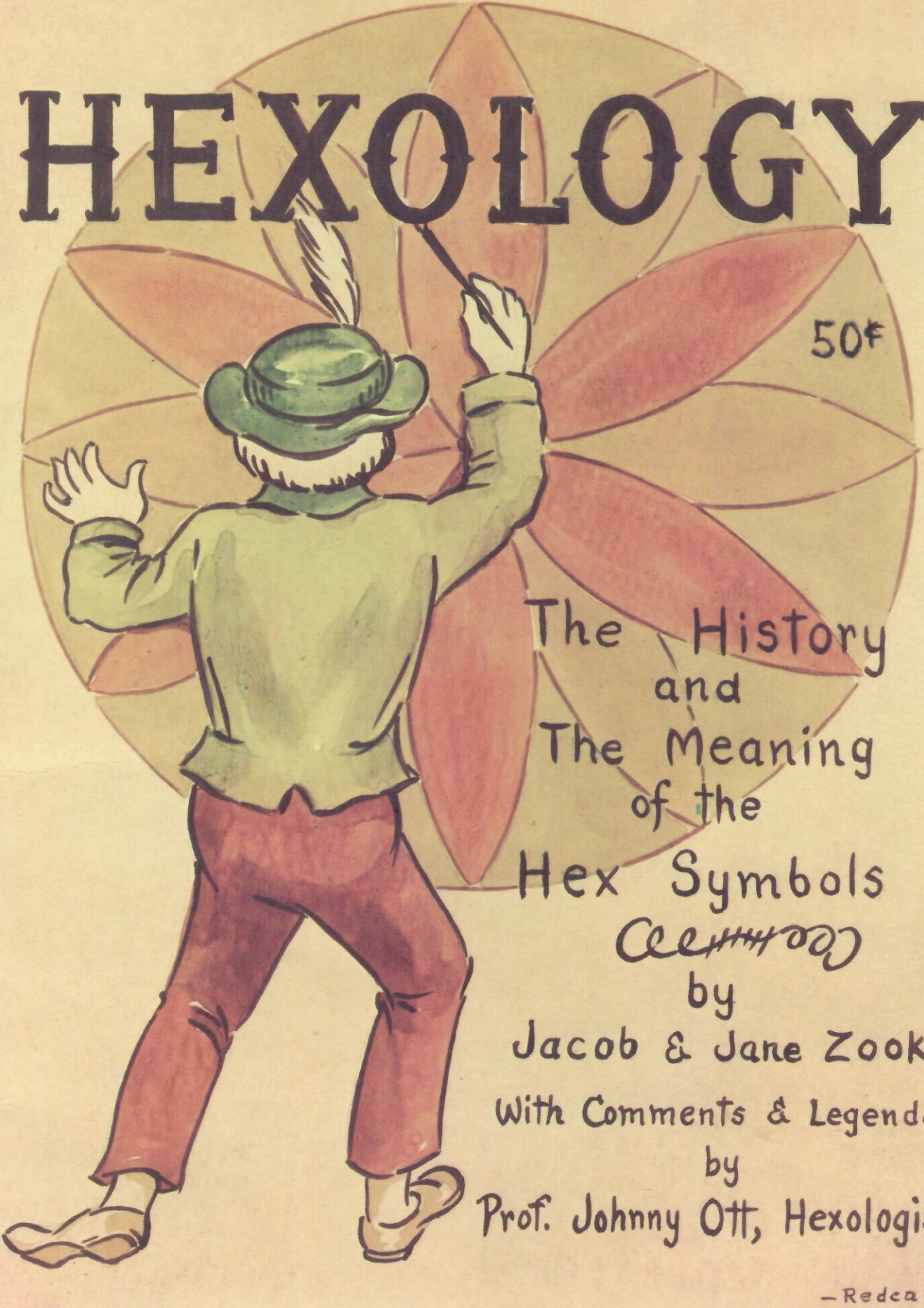

The History
and
The Meaning
of the
Hex Symbols

by
Jacob & Jane Zook

With Comments & Legends
by
Prof. Johnny Ott, Hexologist

—Redcay

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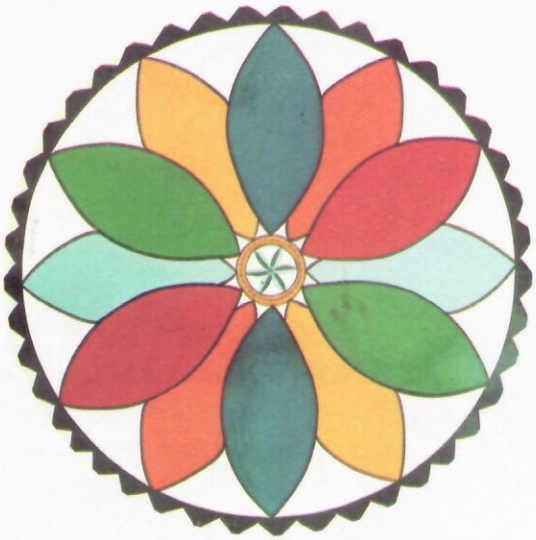
Published by Jacob and Jane Zook

Paradise, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania



HEXOLOGY

THE HISTORY AND MEANINGS OF HEX SIGNS

by
Jacob and Jane Zook
with comments and legends by
Professor Johnny Ott, Hexologist

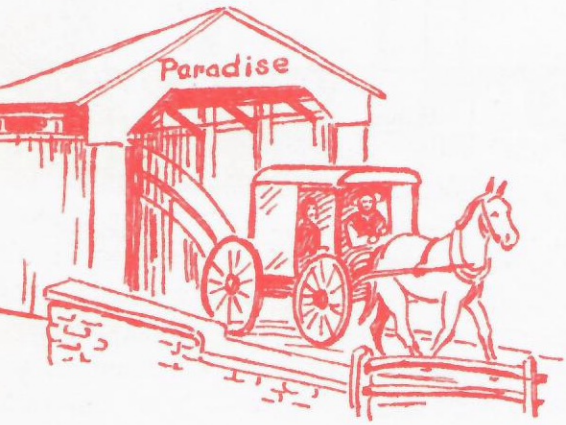
Dedicated to Our Children;
Jacob, Peter, Sarah and Jane, 12th generation Pennsylvania Dutchmen who share our love of family, love of the lands, the religions, the customs, the legends, the food and the art of our people.

—JACOB AND JANE ZOOK

Copyright 1962
by Jacob and Jane Zook
1st Printing July 1962
2nd Printing July 1963
3rd Printing July 1964
4th Printing Sept. 1965
5th Printing July 1966
6th Printing August 1968
7th Printing March 1970

IN THE VALLEYS, the foothills, the rolling hills and the mountains of southeastern Pennsylvania, in the middle of the lands between the Delaware and Susquehanna Rivers live the people who are the Pennsylvania Dutch. These people are religious, industrious, thrifty, compassionate, and superstitious.

Originally religious refugees from the countries bordering the Rhine, these people the Amish, Mennonites, Lutherans, Reformed, Dutch Quakers, French Huguenots and other groups came to America seeking the religious freedom promised by William Penn. They landed at Philadelphia and then the great majority migrated westward to Penn's lands of southeastern Pennsylvania. They cleared their lands, built their big bank barns and worshipped in their churches and in their homes.



The Amish and the Mennonites established the beautiful farms, the brothers and the sisters of the Community of Ephrata contributed the exquisitly drawn and colored illuminated manuscripts, the Lutherans and the Reformed gave their customs of celebrating Christmas and Easter, the Moravians wrote their secular hymns and played their orchestral music, and all contributed their faith in God and their religious customs to produce the culture.

From this great melting pot of people from many lands and of many religions, free to worship, free to work and free to create merged the homogeneous culture of the Pennsylvania Dutch. And from the culture came a true folk art second to none in America and a wealth of folklore and legend.

The tulips, the lilies, the pelicans, and the hearts of the folk artist were not the naturalistic flowers of the fields and birds of the land, but the images created from man's subconsciousness, his love of God, and his dream of the mystical lily that

PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH HEX BARN

blooms in all ends of the earth. Between these symbolic designs and the literary traditions, the hymnals, the bible and the poems there existed a direct association. So then, the flowers were those that grew in the garden of Paradise.

The images were found tooled into the leather of the family bible, on taufscheine (birth certificates), on the illuminated manuscripts from the Ephrata Cloisters, embroidered on linens, cast into the iron stove plates and trivets, pierced into tinware, and scratched onto the sgraffitto pottery, cut into tombstones, painted on the dower chests and the huge bank barns.

The barns, great soaring structures, with a forebay, are found only in the Pennsylvania Dutch lands of southeastern Pennsylvania. Some are built of native stone, but most of wood painted red or white.

The Amish and Mennonites and the other plain sects never had "Hex Signs" painted on their barns and we are certain they never will have. Ask any Amishman if he would like a sign for his barn and the answer is a swift, "No". Ask him why not and you never get more than a polite, "Thank you just the same, but no."

The big, beautiful, colorful, geometric designs were found on the barns of the Lutherans, Reformed and other church people, "the gay people," never those of "the plain people." The designs are geometric of whorling swatstikas, tear drops, stars and rosettes.

Did the signs mark the home of a friend for others of their people in a strange land? Did the swatstikas prevent the witches from crossing the threshold of the barn?

Landis Valley Farm Museum in Lancaster County has a collection of utilitarian objects marked with the sign of the cross. Among the collection is a door latch with crosses on the handle bar supposedly to prevent the entry of the devil's emissaries. The late Henry Landis, one of the co-founders of the Museum speaking of Hex Marks as Talismans has said, "So we find to-day a widespread belief in hexerie, braucherei, powwows, hexa marrik, gruttafoos (witchcraft, healing without medicines, powwowing or healing by words and motions, marks placed to ward off spells, and so on). With this belief goes a profound faith in signs, symbols, and the formulas of the powwow doctors." George Korson speaking of a barn in Schuylkill County said, "The barn had crudely carved crosses on the overhang and on doors leading to the stalls. They were accompanied by the phrase, "In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost." The carvings were the work of an amateur, the farmer himself perhaps, invoking the blessing of the Holy Trinity on his cattle."

And these "Barn Signs" which have been labeled "Hex Signs" were they not then a sign of faith and also a part of the legends and the superstitions of the Pennsylvania Dutch?

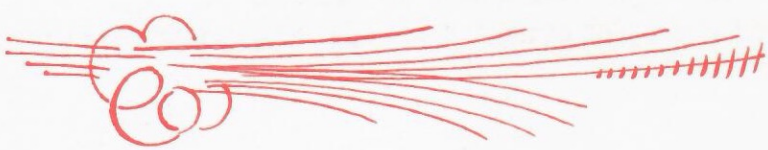
The Pennsylvania Dutch were and are a very religious people and also were and are a very superstitious people.

One day last summer a black cat crossed our path. The following day we were to leave home on a trip to Vermont. Greatly concerned and not knowing the remedy to rid ourselves of the bad luck this omen might produce we spoke to Jerry Lestz, scribe of our local newspaper and an authority on superstitions, folklore and moon-lore. "Well" said Jerry, "the only thing I know that will help you will be to see first a white horse and then a red haired woman." We left home sad and perturbed expecting misfortune to befall us any minute. As we drove along the Pennsylvania Turnpike passing through Valley Forge we saw the beautiful old farmhouses surrounded by the tulip and dogwood trees. Standing there by a small stable was a pure white horse. Great sigh of relief, just maybe our luck would hold. Late that evening we arrived in Vermont. Hungry and tired we found a restaurant and were seated at our table. When our waitress handed us menus we glanced at her and there was our red haired woman. Well, needless to say our business trip was most successful.

We never date a check or letter the 13th, charge a customer or pay a bill for 13 cents or 13 dollars, no we use the 12th of any month for two days, and bill or pay some one $12.99. We knock on wood for good luck, never pass anyone on the stairs as it might bring bad luck. You only leave by the same door as you entered so as to take your good luck with you. The moon plays a great part in the success or failure of your garden. Root vegetables, such as carrots and beets are only planted during the down grade of the moon and leaf vegetables as spinach and lettuce during the upgrade of the moon. Warts are disposed of easily by rubbing them with an onion, placing the onion under a rain spout and then when it rots the warts fall off.

A few years ago we met and became great friends of Professor Johnny Ott. Johnny is an upcountry Dutchman, a true folk artist, a deeply religious man and a great purveyor of legends and folklore. He is a colorful character on the Pennsylvania Dutch scene, self-termed Professor of Hexology, his nocturnal habits lend a bohemian touch to the usual picture of the staid Dutchman. Johnny goes to bed around nine o'clock in the morning, gets up about six-thirty in the evening, eats his dinner, dons one of his picturesque hats and then starts to paint his love signs, distlefinks and rain signs. About seven-thirty in the morning he puts aside his brush, eats his breakfast and goes to bed.

And so before you decide should it be faith, should it be hexerie, should it be the Dutchmans' love of color that was the driving force that created the hexes that were painted on the barns, let Professor Ott tell you in his own words a part of the legend.



FOREWORD BY PROFESSOR JOHNNY OTT, HEXOLOGIST.....

T'S BEEN gone on and on for centuries, that many tribes have believed in the today called Hexerie, Hex, and today a lot of it is called faith, good fortune, breaks and good luck. The hex is of course Penna. Dutch, now called jinks.

While we all believe in it in some form or another, for instance cross fingers, nock on wood, under ladder, etc. Just about everybody, has good luck pieces, luckey pocket pieces, charmes, medals, luckey days. Religious people weare medals, statuetts for faith, poker or card players change seats and decks, when Friday falls on 13th the U. S. A. does fifty million dollars less business, the people just don't travel, spend or try new enterprizes ect that day. And why don't Hotels have thirteen floors, because people think they are hexed.

There is a reason for all this hexerie, and you cannot blame some people for having faith in it. They heard it at dinner table from grandparents, their mother and father and relations, they related many proven facts about the hex (witchcraft).

What these children seen and heard at home from parents they believe, and I don't think they want to know different.

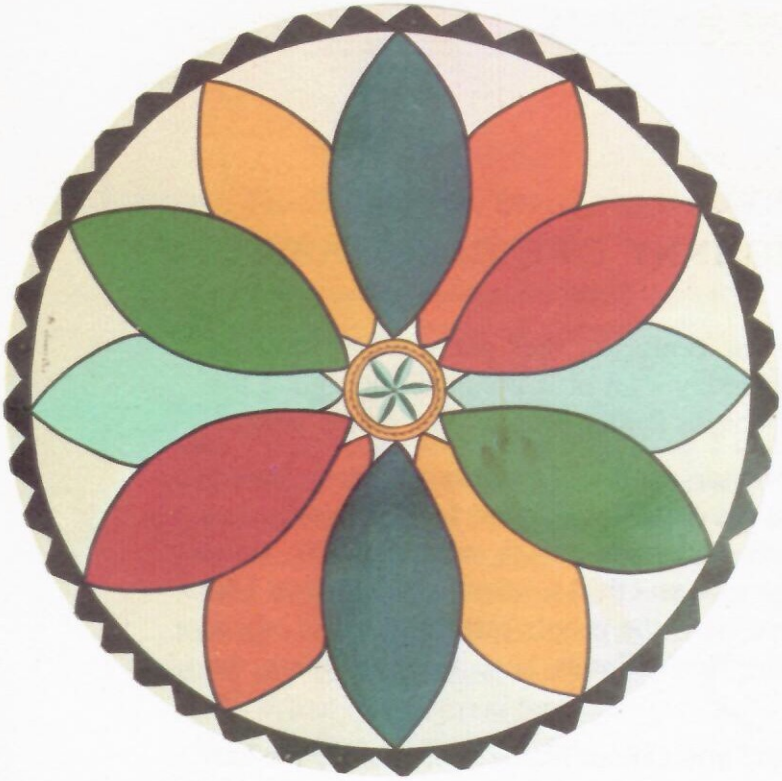
There are some clans who have their own hex signs, like a coat of arms, and if anybody married in the relation they also use the insignia, then people passing will know which clan they belong, the Millers, Snyders, Fishers etc.

And these hex signs realy pay off sometimes. A man came to me from Long Island N. Y. and said six month ago I bought a 2 ft. rain and sun and fertility now we are going to have a baby, now my next door neighbor wants a baby I have to have *another* sign.

A lady from Edystone, Pa. complained her husband slaped her around, I made her a love and romance, the next week she was back for two more for her relation.

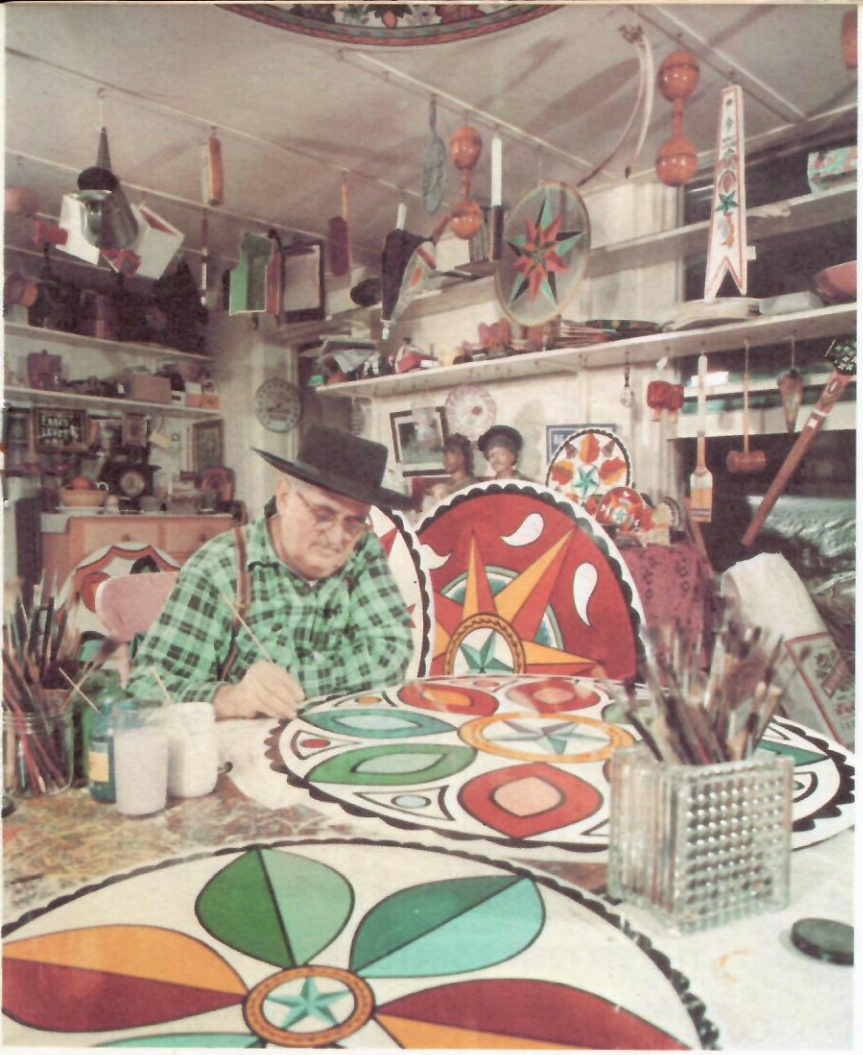
A Mr. Davis in San Antonio, Tex. had no water for his cattle. I sent him a rain sign down, the next day it rained fancy. The San Antonio Light newspaper gave me a big write up.

I went fishing up to Sands Eddy along the Delaware river above Easton Pa to a Joseph James a retired cement worker. The fish weren't biting I ask Joe whats the reason he said we need rain. So I took Joe a rain sign up told him to put it out when he wants rain, when enough take it in, he went away and left it out, the rain come and washed away the shed where the Hex sign was on and did 5 million dollar damage along the Delevare river 1955."



Rosette with Your Lucky Star

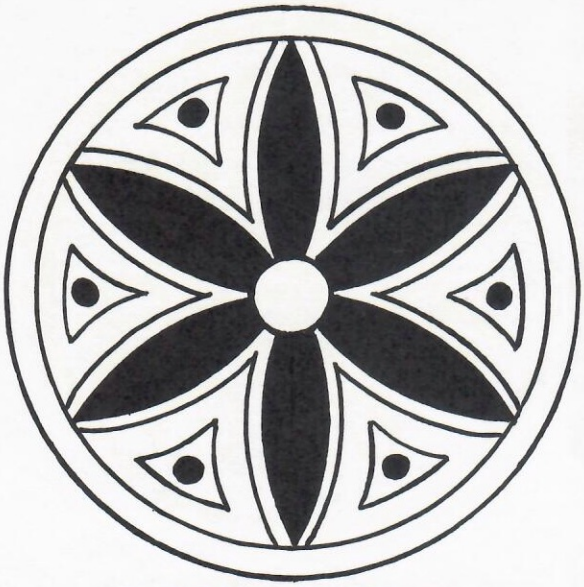
Professor Johnny Ott, Hexologist shown plying his trade as Distlefink and Hex Sign artist.



The Professor whiles away the midnight hours painting a Hex Sign for one of his lucky customers.

Professor Johnny proudly exhibits some of his fabulous handpainted "Hexes".

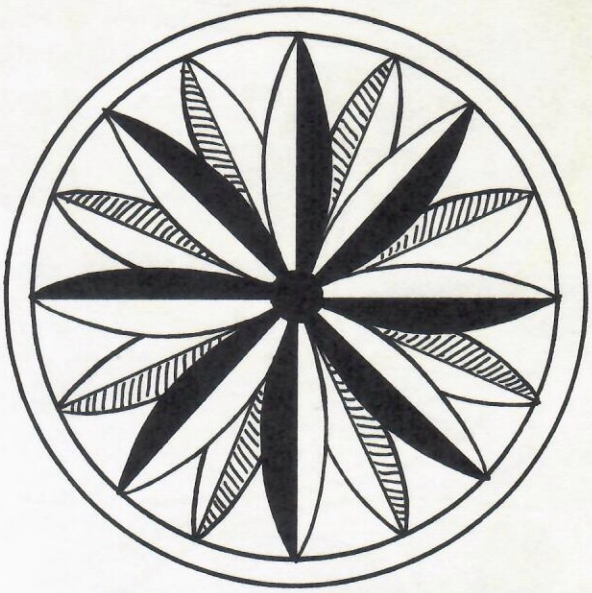
PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH HEX SIGNS BY PROFESSOR JOHNNY OTT, HEXOLOGIST AND JACOB ZOOK, THE HEX MAN.



THE DOUBLE ROSETTE

Searching and researching through many books I find The Double Rosette is the beginning of all hex signs, and it is the rose window you see in our new modern churches of today.

This sign is cut in stone, set in the side of entrance of Old Greek Church in Athens, year 1453.

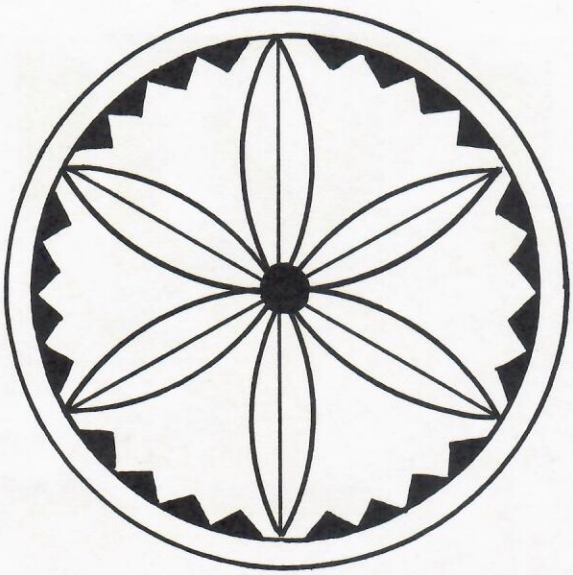


THE SIXTEEN POINTED ROSETTE

Another design in same church cut in a yelloish stone in the Byzantine Christian times. On this Athens Byzantine church walls are found stone slabs with cross designs, rosettes, double headed eagles and many geometric designs.

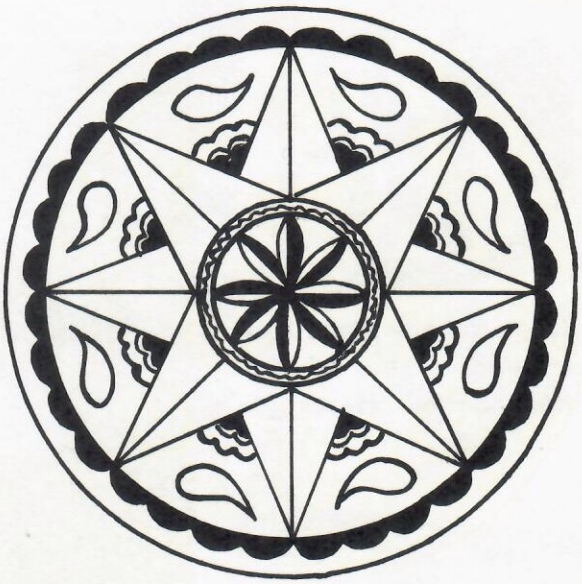
SINGLE ROSETTE

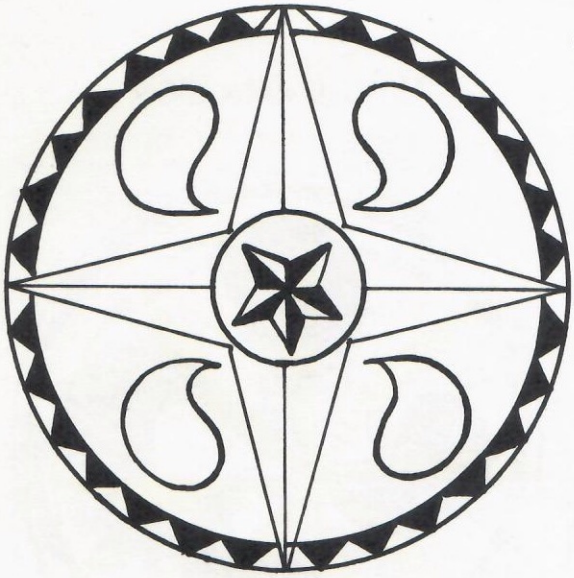
This is the most popular because it is a do-it-yourself with a string or compass. To keep away all bad or ill luck.



RAIN, SUN AND FERTILITY

The rain and sun for crop abundance, fertility for life.





IRISH HEX

▼ Have you heard the legendary story of the Irish and the Pennsylvania Dutch at Valley Forge?

During that cold winter when General Washington's armies were camped at Valley Forge the Pennsylvania Dutch and Irish troops passed the time by fighting among themselves. The Irish would chant, "Hooray for the Irish the're not very much, but the're a darn sight better than the Pennsylvania Dutch". And as the story goes, it was during one of these fights that an Irishman put a shamrock on a Dutchman's Hex Sign to bring the Irish luck.

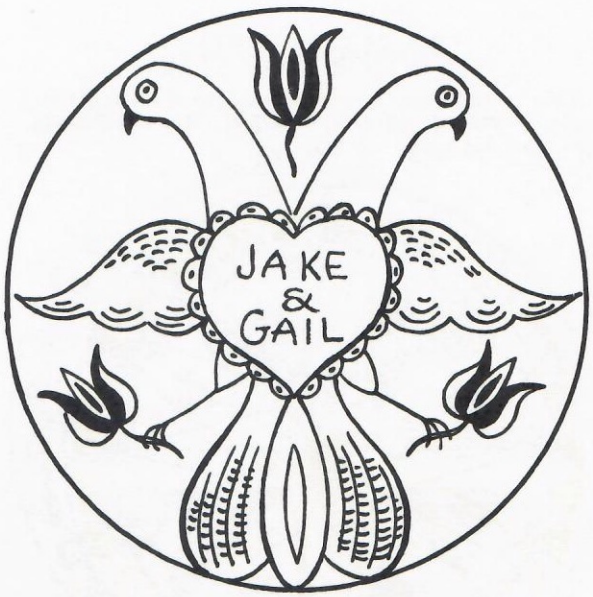
The shamrock here is good luck for the Irish. The heart, love for your fellow man, the distlefink, the good luck bird, two for double good luck, the Trinity Tulips, faith in yourself, faith in what you do and faith in your fellow man, and the scallops around the border were ocean waves for smooth sailing through life.

◀ SUN, RAIN AND LUCKY STAR

Sun and rain for crop abundance and water. Your lucky star for good luck.

THE DOUBLE TRINITY TULIPS

The heart for love, the tulips for faith in yourself, faith in what you do and faith in your fellow man—"faith, hope and charity", and the scallops for smooth sailing through life.

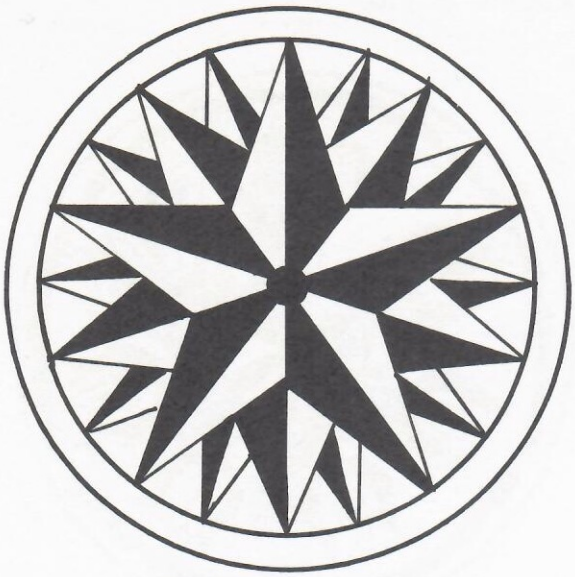


THE DOUBLE HEADED EAGLE

The heart laced for love in marriage, the tulips for faith, hope and charity, and the eagle for strength and courage.

THE RAIN SIGN

A symbol of Rain.

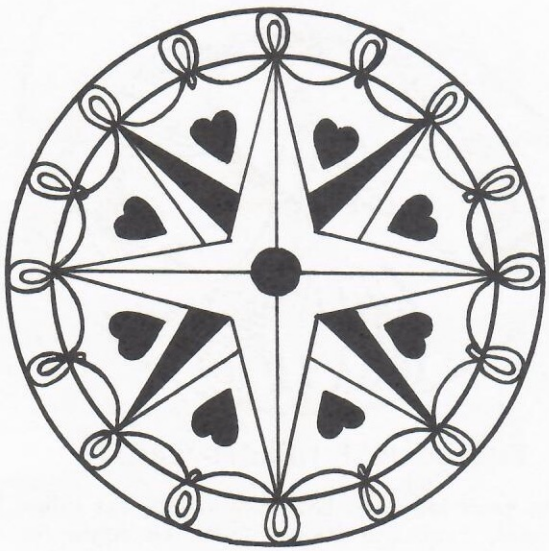


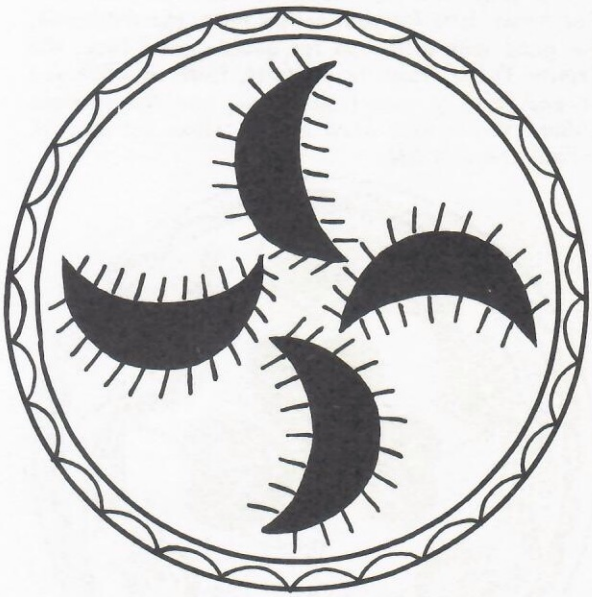
THE TRIPLE STAR

Good luck, success and happiness.

THE MORNING STAR

The morning star for a bright day, the hearts, love and kindness for others.





THE FOUR SEASONS

The four seasons of the year, spring, summer, autumn and winter.

THE MIGHTY OAK

For strenght in body and mind and character, the border is the ocean for smooth sailing in the autumn years of life.

LOVE, ROMANCE AND MARRIAGE

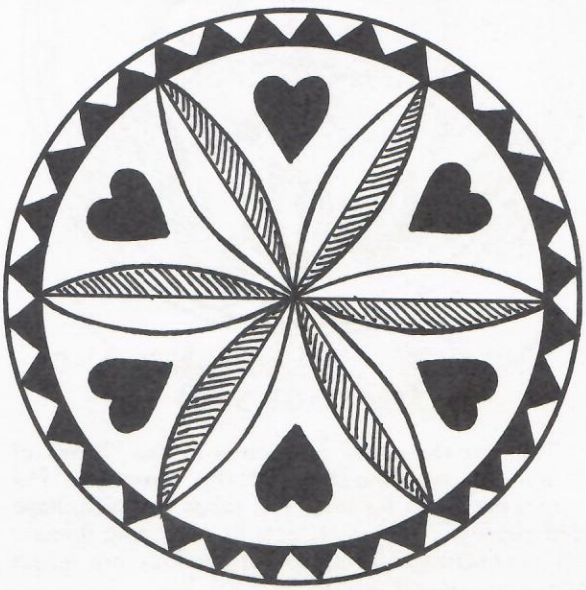
The heart is laced for love in marriage, the distlefinks, one for good luck for the wife and one for the husband, the Trinity tulips for faith, hope and charity, and the scallops for smooth sailing through life together.

YOUR LUCKY STARS

These are your lucky stars.

LOVE AND ROMANCE

Rosette and hearts of love and romance.



SUCCESS

For health, wealth and happiness.

BARN SIGN

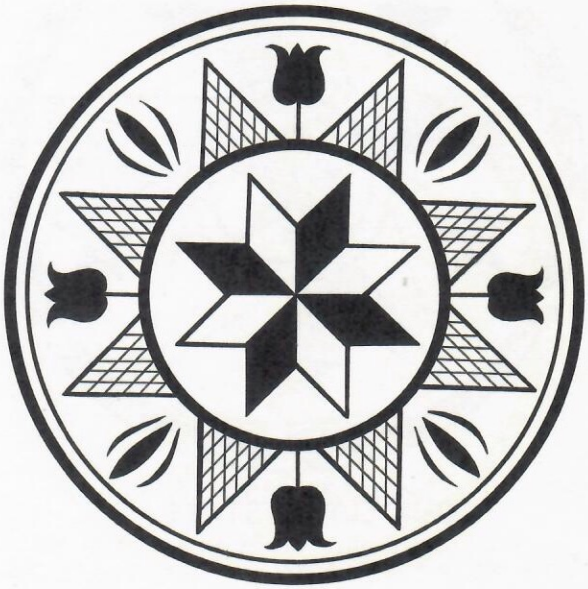
To protect the barn from lightning and the livestock from disease.

ANOTHER LOVE, ROMANCE AND MARRIAGE SIGN

This has the added protection of the "Doves of Peace" to insure a long blissful marriage. The hearts are laced for love. The tulips for faith, hope and charity. The serpant acts as a warning against all temptation. The border of scallops are ocean waves for smooth sailing through life.

THE EIGHT POINTED STAR

The eight-pointed star for abundance and good will. The tulips for faith.



THE SINGLE DISTELFINK

The Distelfink was the "good luck" bird of the early Pennsylvania settlers. The heart, love for your fellow man.

THE DOUBLE DISTLEFINK

The birds are Distlefinks, the good luck bird of the early Pennsylvania Dutch settlers. This was a goldfinch who ate thistle seed and used the thistle down for his nest; thus called the Thistlefinch, hence the Pennsylvania Dutch "Distlefink". The Trinity tulips for faith in yourself, faith in what you do and faith in your fellow man.

UNICORNS

The Unicorn was the symbol of virtue and piety. It was related that this wild and unconquerable animal became tame when confronted by a maiden; he would lay his head in her lap and was easily taken by the hunter. The tulips in the design are for faith, hope, and charity.

HAUS-SEGEN

The early Haus-Segen (house blessing) was a prayer asking for protection for the home and for the family. The two distelfinks at the bottom to help insure good fortune.

And now we leave it to you good friends, do you dare chance fate or should you not wear a heart on your sleeve that you may have faith, hope and charity for your fellow man.

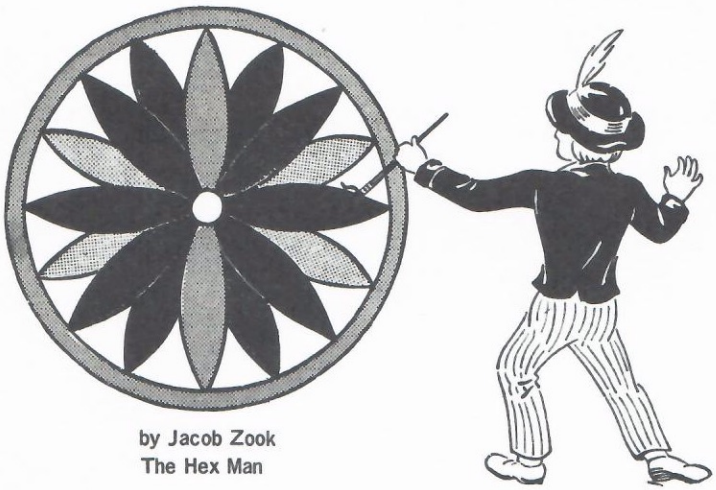
Jacob Zook "The Hex Man" finishing a large "rain" sign soon to be placed on a Pennsylvania Dutch barn with it's promise for rain during a recent dry spell. Zook's "hexes" have traveled to the fifty states and many foreign lands.

The barns, great soaring structures with a forbay, are found only in southeastern Pennsylvania. This prime example still standing, still in beautiful repair, still beautifully decorated with the Hex Signs stands on old Route No. 22 at New Smithville, Pennsylvania.

This Hex barn decorated by Hexologist Johnny Ott is located on old Route No. 22, one mile west of Shartlesville, Pennsylvania.

PHOTOS BY JIM HESS

From the Land of Hex Signs & Distelfinks.



by Jacob Zook
The Hex Man

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Here is the book you have asked for. For the Home Decorator, whether beginner or advanced hobbyist, a complete instruction book for painting and decorating furniture, tinware, woodenware and textiles. There's a chapter too on finishing furniture in the natural. All of the various techniques of painting are fully explained in easy to follow directions. Also, complete lists of required materials. Illustrated in full color and black and white. Price $1.50

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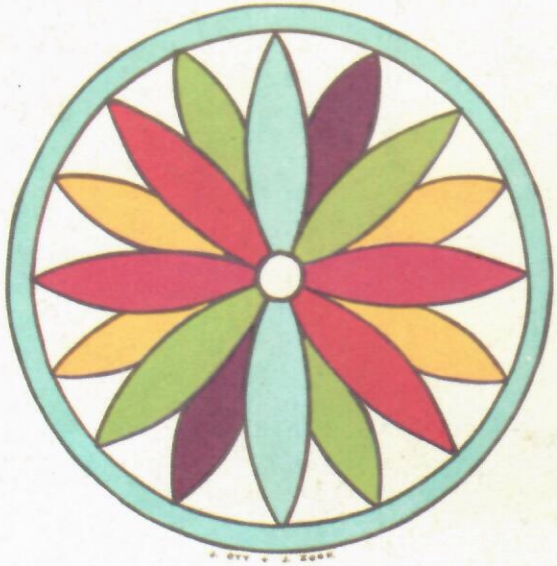
All of the above publications are packaged in beautifully decorated and colorful portfolios.

THE VILKUM DISTLEFINK

THE MIGHTY OAK

GOOD LUCK



SIXTEEN POINTED ROSETTE

IRISH HEX

LOVE, ROMANCE & MARRIAGE

Printed in U. S. A.
SOWERS / Lebanon, Pa.

From The Land of Hex Signs & Distelfinks

Legendary Penna. Dutch Hex Signs

by Jacob Zook, Hexologist

Need rain for the crops?
Been having "bad luck" lately?
Have a love or romance problem?
or,
just want to "fancy-up" your home?
--- then, perhaps,
you may want to select an appropriate
"good luck" Hex Sign by Jacob Zook.

ABOUT THE HEX SIGN YOU BUY

For those who appreciate true craftsmanship, Jacob Zook, Hexologist, offers a collection of 27 originally designed Hex Signs in the three popular sizes. His signs have traveled to the 50 states, to Presidents, and, yes, even to a King.

Jacob Zook, a 12th generation Pennsylvania Dutchman, is the authority on Hex Signs, their history, legends, design and colors.

All of this at competitive prices. So insist on the name ZOOK on the HEX SIGNS you buy.

Hang OUTDOORS with 5 small rustproof nails or screws as shown. Hang INDOORS with 1 small nail thru center hole. OUTDOORS, extend the life by applying a coat of gloss varnish.

Painted in the "Heart" of the Pennsylvania Dutch Country

No. 1 DOUBLE DISTELFINK
for "double good luck"

No. 2 MIGHTY OAK
for strength

No. 3 GOOD LUCK
your lucky stars

No. 4 UNICORNS
virtue and piety

No. 5 IRISH HEX
Dutch-Irish good luck sign

No. 6 SUN, RAIN and FERTILITY
abundance in fields, barn & home

No. 7 LOVE, ROMANCE
for bliss and happiness

No. 8 VILKUM SIGN
home "welcome" sign

No. 9 RAIN
crop abundance

No. 10 "8" POINTED STAR
abundance and good will

No. 11 SINGLE DISTELFINK
bird of good luck & happiness

No. 12 DADDY HEX
grandaddy of all "hexes"

No. 14 MORNING STAR
bright, happy day

No. 15 AMISH CARRIAGE HORSE
protects barn and livestock

No. 16 HERFORD
protects barn and livestock

No. 17 MARRIAGE SIGN
to insure a long, blissful marriage

No. 18 "12" PETAL ROSETTE
each month a joyous one

No. 19 COLONIAL EAGLE
a symbol of strength, renewal and independence

No. 20 DIE BLUUME
the flowers

No. 21 TULIPS
faith

No. 22 DOUBLE HEADED EAGLE
strength and courage

No. 23 HAUS-SEGEN
house blessing

No. 24 THE FOUR SEASONS
prosperity

No. 25 THE TRIPLE STAR
good luck, success, happiness

No. 26 STAR BURST
wish upon a star

No. 27 MAPLE
appreciation of life's beauty

No. 28 LOVE & PEACE

No. 29 VIRTUES REWARD
end of rainbow

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